

With the increased intensity of news reports and social media posts regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID19), comes speculation about the impact this virus may eventually have on school communities. It is important for you to know the most accurate and timely information about this health concern.

1. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has published a Fact Sheet to explain what the virus is, how it is spread, who is at risk, and how to protect yourself.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/nCOV-2019_General_Fact_Sheet_v2-4-20_680266_7.pdf

2. There is also a CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Frequently Asked Questions document that specifically addresses concerns about children and the virus. It explains that so far there is no evidence to suggest that children are more susceptible to the virus than the general population.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

3. Additional updates (including current case information for Michigan) can be found at the MDHHS COVID19 website (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website).

https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970_5093_28508_76849-520225--,00.html

As always, our schools work closely with public health officials and follow all of their expert recommendations to best ensure the safety of everyone in our school community.

As you know learning at our school primarily occurs inside classrooms with face-to-face teaching by certified instructors. Any guidance on recovering the learning that may be lost during a potential school closing will come from the Michigan Department of Education. In the meantime, be assured that our schools are prepared to intensify cleaning practices throughout our buildings and will follow all directions provided by public health to prevent and limit the virus.

According to public health officials, the way COVID-19 is spread is very similar to the flu and common colds. For this reason, we are encouraging our students and staff to use the same precautions they would normally take to avoid these illnesses. Please encourage the following practices at home as we do in school to help prevent illness.

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.

Parents are encouraged to keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after their fever is broken without the benefit of medication and contact their healthcare provider.

We have open and effective lines of communication with our public health officials and will alert students, staff and parents if we receive direction related to COVID-19. Any potential school closing due to illness will be guided by public health officials. While education is important, the health and wellbeing of our students and staff are far more significant.